7: Thompson--378-379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 779, 797

"In April 1881 two priests from the Society of Foreign Missions went to Oubone, where they found not a single native Christian. On a tour which they later made throughout Laos they found only four Christians in the whole country, two Siamese and two Annamites. When they began to evangelize Laos the current anarchy bred by the Ho invasions, Siamese deportations, and the perennial economic uncertainty was conducive to an encouraging number of conversions. With the establishment of the French, political security was assured, and the number of converts began visibly to decline. The ease of the early conversions had been misleading. Through centuries of persecution and uncertainty the Laotians have acquired a marked flair for success. They know to a fine point what earthly authorities it is worth their while to please. Moreover, the Laotians share the usual Asiatic indifference to dogma. One religion is as good to them as another, provided it does not upset the [379] social structure. Catholic discipline is irksome too. The Laotians find the indissolubility and relative asceticism of a Christian marriage far less congenial than their traditional polyandry and polygamy. The missionaries have also vainly tried to induce them to clothe themselves more voluminously and to give up opium."

7: Thompson--379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 797

"The Laotians have never been persecutors and they are hopelessly apathetic. Politely but interminably they put off conversion, on one flimsy excuse after another. Latin and their catechism are literally impossible for them to master. They seem to be paying attention, the missionaries complain, but their minds wander. Lack of roads and the unhealthiness of the country make it doubly hard for missionaries to press salvation upon them with sufficient regularity. Famines make the Laotians migrate, and they are naturally and historically nomadic. The Mission is not rich enough nor adequately staffed to offer them regular employment. Moreover, it would not be the same inducement to the Laotians that it is to the Annamites. One worthy Father wrote:

> If the Laotian is not moved by fear, vexations, or lawsuits; if he is not shunned by everyone because of a hideous or incurable disease--he cannot bring himself without the greatest difficulty to study religion. He remains as quiet as a rat in his hole. He is neither hostile nor savage, but is simply a child who makes any excuse to put off his baptism. (1)

1. Société des Missions Etrangères: Compte Rendu des Travaux (Archives du Séminaire, Paris, 1900), pp. 249-50."

7: Thompson--379-380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 659, 797

"The static condition of the Laotian Mission moved the Society to change its policy. As in Annam, they are trying to appeal to all classes of the people through education, books, and medical care. The cult of phi, or evil spirits, is so deep-rooted in Laotians and so universally practised in cases of sickness, that Western science and social service can perhaps find there the most advantageous point for attacking native superstitions. Of course, here as elsewhere, they encounter the administration's jealous rivalry, but as yet in Laos penetration of any sort is so superficial that there is room for all comers. The government has recently dealt a blow to Mission prestige, as it did in Cambodia, by becoming the patron of Buddhism. Though recently founded, the Buddhist Institute in Luang-Prabang aims to train bonzes who formerly went to Bangkok for their instruction, as well as their investiture. This not only counteracts Siamese influence--and Bangkok has always been the lodestar of Laotian aspirations--but it is part of the French policy with Indianized peoples to revive their cultural heritage. In 1907 Tournier chose Vientiane to transform into a modern city, for he thought [380] that it might attract all Laotians thither and away from Bangkok, the moral capital of the Thai people. It remains to be seen whether all these attempts will be successful."

7: Thompson--380 J-4 (no date ) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 797

"The missionaries, even if they made little headway in conversions, enjoy great moral influence in Laos, especially among the mountain peoples, to whom they teach new methods of agriculture, in addition to their medical, educational, and Scriptural activities. These primitive peoples do not differentiate between spiritual and temporal authorities, and often use the missionary as intermediary with the administration. These regions are so remote, and their economic and political importance so obviously relegated to the future, that the Mission has not encountered there the anti-clerical opposition that existed for so long in Annamite countries."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8



sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated. If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market — *with the bonze's approval* — to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity — apart from any question as to their relative merits — is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions — little of which he can personally consume — would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities — by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the Laotians they are charmed with them — although, of course, disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Miao AE5



language or religion, cannot follow the subtlety of Western religious concepts. They have a passion for taking things *au pied de la lettre*. Being told that the basic commandment of Christianity as well as Buddhism is 'thou shalt not kill', they cannot swallow such reservations as capital punishment and 'the just war'; while casuistry repels them. Moreover, a bonze, the spiritual leader of the country people among whom he lives and works, occupies by virtue of his rigorous fulfilment of the principles of his religion, a position in their esteem accorded in the West, say, to a boxing champion. The Laotians have come to associate the prestige of sanctity with certain abstinences and uncomfortable practices. The bonze gives an example of utter renunciation which is awe-inspiring by comparison with the minor self-abnegations of the villagers. The Laotians, therefore, although tolerant in the extreme, are not impressed by the worth of a would-be spiritual leader who presents himself to them loaded with material possessions. And this negative attitude deepens into a certain aversion if, as usually happens, the holy men of the West spend most of their time hunting in a country where animals must be allowed to die of old age. I fear that where the austere Dominicans, and the Jesuits failed, there is little hope for the Evangelists.

However, the missionary was far from despondent. There were Meos in the mountains not far from Vientiane, and just as in the plateaux of Viet-Nam the Moïs had not rejected the Gospel, so here the primitive peoples of the mountains seemed promising material for evangelization. There would be no risk of jeopardizing conversion by hunting, among such hearty amateurs of open-air sports as the Meos, and if the missionary had more of this world's goods than they – well, that was a sure sign that his *ai* (or spirit), was stronger, and it would be a good thing to imitate him. Before the Meos could trouble themselves with renunciatory religions they would have to create a comfortable and abundant civilization for themselves. There was no chance of becoming sated with prosperity at the top of their mountains.

Around 1597 Belloso and Gonzalez "dared" to wander adventurously across South Annam and even Champa in search of the king of Cambodia who had taken refuge in Laos. In 1608 another adventurer in the grand manner, de Brito (2), dreamed of ex-

2. Philippe de Brito Nicole died in Pégou, preferring impalement to prostration (sumbaya) before the king. For the same reason, other Portuguese adventurers of the grand period were boiled in oil in Siam.

tending his ephemeral sovereignty in Burma not only over Chieng Mai and Siam, but as far as Luang Prabang. His plans failed. The geographer [53] of Malacca, Godinho de Eredia, compiled a whole collection of information on this remote kingdom about the same time.

But the missionaries, it would seem, were the most persevering in their efforts to remedy the isolation of Laos, particularly the Portuguese Jesuit Cardim (1). The latter

1. Father Cardim, Relations della Provincia del Giappone. Rome, 1643.

has given various accounts of his efforts and those of his predecessors. If we are to believe him, three Portuguese traders had already entered through Cambodia when Antonio Gançalves Cavallerio persuaded the Superior of the Jesuits of Macao to send

several Fathers there in 1624, almost immediately after the first incident of the bar of Siam. Father Cardim and a Japanese companion left Macao on December 13, 1625 to go and study the language at Ayuthia [HD: then the capital of Siam], but sickness and reprisals against the acts of the Spaniards in 1629 caused the project to fail once again (H. Bernard). It was to be resumed later by Father Borelli and Father J. Baptiste Bonel, the latter of whom "died in Laos or Layès" (A. de Rhodes).

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole 433 region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it 438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

133 At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by wellnigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks [177 to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. 797] This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain 563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

## § IV--HYDROLOGY

### a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right. 000

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our poisession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed a force of absolute inertia to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited. 563 173

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and material improvement. There are many, for example, who have adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 563 795 797.

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism. 563 177

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 205 206

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows: 658 871

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the College Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

Apostolic missions. 797

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

Hill Tribes

797 The others are attached to the bishop of Binh-Dinh (Annam), and work in the mountains separating Laos from the Annamite empire.

"The missionaries attached to Bangkok have established (3):

(3) A bishopric at Nong-Sene.

"1. A Christian community at Bassac (right bank) which spreads out onto the left bank. Most of their Christians are Annamites, former slaves whom they have redeemed and liberated;

"2. A seminary on the island of Don-Done, a little way upstream from Lakhone;

"3. A Christian community at Tha-Khek (left bank);

"4. A Christian community at Pat-Choum (left bank);

"5. In the region of Pak-Sane (Vien-Tiane), a few Catholic families receive spiritual guidance from a missionary whose residence is on the right bank (Muong-Couk).

[282] "No Catholic missionary has penetrated into French Laos further north of this point.

"The extremely diligent efforts on the part of the reverend fathers have had scarcely any success in achieving conversions. By their very character the natives are inclined to be resistant towards all new religions. These leave them indifferent but not hostile, to be sure, for they are very tolerant. They are greatly attached to their docile Buddhism, which is too well suited to their character and habits for them to abandon it. Is it not Buddhism, moreover, which by giving them their moral philosophy, their [Illustration here] laws, their customs and their organization has made them what they are? Thus they are repelled en masse by the idea of adopting a new faith and a moral discipline which cannot be adapted to their mores.

"Under the direction of an apostolic provicar, the missionaries attached to the bishop of Binh-Dinh (Annam) have developed quite an extensive mission in the southeastern part of Laos. These fathers have divided their sphere of action into seven districts, the capitals of which are Kon-Toum, Kon-Meney, Kon-Ketou, Kon-Xabang, Kon-Ngo, Kon-Trang and Ro-Hay. A church has been built in each center and a missionary father customarily lives there. Beside each church is an orphanage where Annamites and Khas are taken in who are former slaves purchased by the fathers from the Cedangs, or who have come from Annam as a result of the famines in these last [283] [Illustration] [284] [Blank page] [285] few years. In addition to

these centers, the spiritual authority of the fathers extends over fifty-four other villages located among the Bahnars, the Goclars and the Rognaos, and even over a few Cedang and Djarai villages. 797

"Although the total number of conversions is not more than 3,000, the moral influence of the missionaries is considerable throughout all this region which is inhabited by Khas of rather a warlike spirit.

"After the last famines in Annam the missionaries took in 1,200 Annamites, both Catholic and non-Catholic, and organized them in three villages on the plateau of Kon-Toum. The village at Ro-Hay numbered 500 inhabitants. But the mortality rate is high among these newcomers and for the moment, at least, it does not seem that the experiment will be successful.

"The Khas in the midst of whom they live regard the reverend fathers rather as officials of the protective government than as apostles of a religion. These primitive folk cannot recognize the difference between spiritual authority and temporal authority. Thus they always address themselves to the missionaries and it is through the latter that our administration acts on these peoples.

"Up to the present time this system has presented nothing but advantages, and it will probably not be modified for a considerable length of time, at least not as long as the present state of affairs prevails and we only have reason to congratulate ourselves on the devoted cooperation which the reverend fathers give us.

"The Protestant missionaries, who are established in Siam and belong to a North American society, have made a few very discreet attempts to evangelize certain of our subjects. So far, however, they have not founded any establishments on our territory" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Laos which we acquired at very little cost and for a sum which is insignificant in comparison to what other colonies have cost, is that one of our possessions which has the smallest number of officials. We have noted elsewhere that its area is equal to half that of France, or very nearly equal to that of Italy. Yet seventy-two agents are sufficient for the administration and general police, including twenty-seven for the European units of the native guard. 647

149: Reinach--208 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635

Treasury:

1 bursar, head of the service and 1 deputy bursar.

Religion:

1 Christian community at Pak-Sane with 1 missionary. [797]

Laotian Fleet:

Launch "Ham-Luong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Vien-Tiane with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach--209 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM3

63/635/162 [293]

# PROVINCE OF CAMMON

Area: 30,000 square kilometers.

Population: 8 Europeans including 1 merchant, 38,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 100.

## Administrative Divisions

| Muongs | Number of villages | | Registered persons | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Laotians | Pacified Khas | Laotians | Pacified Khas |
| Tha-Khek | 113 | | 1,480 | |
| Pak-Hin-Boun | 94 | | 1,271 | |
| Mahasay | 200 | | 1,262 | |
| Kham-Keut | 69 | | 665 | |
| Cammon | 48 | | 702 | |

Pak-Hin-Boun (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 348 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Post: occupied by the Native Guard:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....1 chief guardsman.
Nape.....1 inspector.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....Secondary office.

Religion:

1 seminary at Don-Done
1 director.
2 missionaries.

[297]

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
643] Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat
579 further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

563 The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
668 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
726 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum, who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.